

**LOUISIANA FIVE-YEAR STATE PLAN
FOR THE USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES
AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)
FUNDS**

FISCAL YEARS 2003-2007

Submitted by:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview and Mission.....	1
Major Requirements for Optimal Library Service.....	3
Need 1. Internet & Informational Database Access....	3
Need 2. Library Awareness & Usage.....	7
Need 3. Continuing Education in Technological Processes.....	10
Need 4. Provide Special Services for Visually & Hearing Impaired Citizens.....	12
Summary of Planning & Implementation Procedures.....	14
Stakeholder Inclusion.....	14
Communication of Plan.....	14
Evaluation Plan & Monitoring Procedures.....	15
Appendix I.	
Office of the State Library Strategic Plan, 2002-2007	
Appendix II.	
State Library of Louisiana Advisory Boards	
Appendix III.	
Examples of Programs Sponsored by State Library	

OVERVIEW AND MISSION

The State Library of Louisiana celebrated its diamond anniversary in 2000, marking seventy-five years working toward the establishment and improvement of public libraries across the State. Despite a socioeconomic environment rated poorly by almost any measure, the delivery of free public library service to citizens across the state has progressed steadily and comprehensively over the years. The sixty-six public library systems now in place are reasonably homogenous: ninety two percent of them have parish (county) jurisdictions, and are based on the same enabling legislation, i.e. organizationally similar. The State Library works closely with the public library systems to support their local efforts and initiatives, and to provide leadership and services leading to the best possible library service to the citizens of Louisiana.

The mission of the State Library is to build an informed, literate, and participative citizenry by ensuring preservation of and access to informational, cultural, and recreational resources, especially those resources unique to Louisiana. The philosophy of the State Library is that it will develop and deliver its services and programs in a professional, cooperative, innovative, and accountable manner, and will be responsive to the needs of Louisiana citizens. The overall goal of the agency is to provide a central collection of materials which meets the needs of government, improves local library services across the state, maintains libraries in state institutions, and services the informational needs of blind and visually impaired citizens. The State Library will play a role in the development of public libraries in parishes throughout the state. We summarize these statements with a motto: **Inform, Empower, Inspire**. These statements are also iterated in the *Strategic Plan FY 2002-2003 through 2006-2007* of the State Library and through its parent department in state government, Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

There has been an increase in collaboration with school libraries and academic libraries in the last several years. Reading programs like the statewide Summer Reading program and the Young Readers' Choice Award have not only improved relationships, but have facilitated private funding and widespread publicity and literacy education throughout the state. Academic libraries have worked closely with State Library to improve a statewide delivery system that has decreased the time required to access interlibrary loans. All libraries have recognized the Louisiana Center for the Book as an important collaborative source for its author database, literary award, and new annual book festival.

Most of LSTA funds are devoted to statewide projects: Summer Reading Program; Interlibrary Loan; statewide delivery; Internet proliferation, maintenance, and sustainability; continuing education of library staff; special services to visually and hearing impaired citizens; and others. Some of the projects are labor intensive, and therefore salaries, and the concomitant projects, are supported with LSTA funds. State

funding alone has never adequately supported the larger projects of the State Library. LSTA funds therefore are an integral part of the overall State Library budget, and, importantly, are crucial to leveraging the state's appropriation for outside funding from sources such as the Gates Library Initiative.

In the next five-year period, the State Library must work hard to maintain not only the statewide programs, but also the technological infrastructure and end user components of the growing sources of electronic information. This plan outlines the future needs of Louisiana citizens and libraries, and our principal programs in response to those needs.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS FOR OPTIMAL LIBRARY SERVICE

Need 1: Internet and Informational Database Access

Need 1. To maintain and enhance wherever possible the infrastructure of Internet and informational database access, so that a ratio of one workstation for every 2000 citizens is maintained; and so that every citizen in Louisiana has access to the internet within twenty minutes of driving time from their home, and access to informational databases at their local libraries AND through home or office computers.

Background and Needs Assessment. In the previous Strategic Plan of the State Library (composed for state government), we set an objective of 650 Internet workstations for the (then) sixty-five public library systems. A mixture of local funds, LSTA funds, and State Aid would have been necessary to achieve even that number. But the Gates Library Foundation (GLF) made Louisiana its second statewide partnership grantee, and because of our needs it was a generous amount. But what also occurred was a leveraging of those funds and other commitments for further expansion of web access across the state.

Louisiana's libraries went beyond the additional 1,150 workstations enabled by the Gates grant, and achieved over 2,000 total within the 327 public library buildings. At that juncture, we realized there was no benchmark or standard for the number of workstations per 1,000 population or per library or per square footage. We set our own objective at one per 2,000 citizens. That meant about 2,150 workstations needed, and that ratio was achieved this past year. Louisiana is a mostly rural state: outside the New Orleans area, only six parishes (counties) out of the remaining 63 have more than 100,000 population. The property tax bases in these poorer areas would rarely support the level of technology made available and possible through State Library initiatives. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration says that 45.7% of Louisiana homes had internet access in 2001. We expect many citizens will continue to need the workstations for Internet access (and other computing tasks). The commitment at the local library level is firm.

The State Library worked to coordinate the Gates installations, then to add to the basic training provided by GLF. Furthermore, the State Library expanded its computer services division to provide technical support for the growing network. The network is a matrix of T1 telecommunication lines to all headquarters libraries (and some large branch libraries); plus over 220 64kb lines reaching all branches within the system. This

connectivity became the responsibility of the State Library, which secured state funds to pay for the lines. State Library went further still, developing a complicated consortium that allows for taking advantage of Universal Service Fund (ERate) discounts.

Informational databases made available through libraries are called the Louisiana Library Connection. State Library coordinates a selection committee that reviews and determines which databases are needed and/or continue to be useful. Database access is available in all the libraries, and also through the websites of the public libraries. Therefore Louisiana citizens have access to a wealth of information in their homes.

The State Library provides leadership and sustenance for the statewide Interlibrary Loan program called Loan Shark. This online and interactive service was developed by the State Library with operating funds that included LSTA funds. The program is supplemented by a statewide delivery service that now reaches almost 100 libraries, including **ALL** public library headquarters, all institutions within the state university system, and several other special libraries.

All of this infra-structural development has created a group of State Library staff devoted to preservation of the network and its functions. State Library resources combined with LSTA funds are therefore heavily committed to maintaining the large number of Internet workstations, supporting those and other computing workstations, selecting databases and training library staff for usage of them, updating and managing the ILL and delivery services. A large e-mail network of public libraries is managed by the State Library.

Local libraries continuously tell us these projects are crucial to the delivery of current and technological services in their libraries. Technical staff do not exist in more than half of the library systems. The State Library provides the technology and the training they utilize. We consult with public library staff and provide advice and leadership that lead to the state of the art service for internet access, application programs, interlibrary loan, informational databases.

State Library receives feedback from an advisory group made up of select administrative librarians. Also, the administrative group as a whole (from the sixty-six systems) meet semi-annually to provide feedback to State Library. Thirdly, there are committees of librarians for selection of databases, and for input into the ILL and delivery systems.

Needs are expressed in every training program (discussed in detail later in this five-year plan) that fills to capacity, and generates feedback for more services from the State Library. We have analyzed and observed the plateau in the number of pc workstations devoted to the Internet. This is due to a combination of saturation of space, manageability, technical and financial support. Having reached in excess of 2,000 workstations, the number grew very slowly, reflected in the annual statistical reporting from the local public libraries to the State Library. This is evidence of a network peaking and in danger of decline (in quality and quantity) if long-range sustainability is not addressed. The Gates Library Foundation is once again providing some grants for

sustainability. Staff and local economic resources are not growing in any numbers to predict further, significant growth.

Therefore the specific objectives for the five year period, with the support of LSTA funds, includes:

Objective 1. Maintain the 1/2000 ratio of Internet workstations as a benchmark; maintain the workstations in every public library building.

Objective 2. Insure support for telecommunications performance at minimally T1 and 64KB speeds. Although telecommunications costs are funded through state funds, the management of the network remains a function of state library staff, and its performance at a high level, with broadband speed, is dependent upon technical support from LSTA funded staff.

Objective 3. Maintain subscriptions to informational databases. The State Library works with and monitors the Selection Committee, and pays for the databases through state funds. However, once again the State Library staff is supported through LSTA to insure that the databases are continuously accessible; and public library staff are trained to instruct and assist users.

Objective 4. Maintain a state of the art Interlibrary Loan technology in which all public library systems participate via 120,000 loans annually; and delivery of shelf items to other libraries in 48 hours.

LSTA Goals addressed in these objectives:

- Establish or enhance electronic links among or between libraries;
- Link libraries electronically with educational, social or information services;
- Help libraries access information through electronic networks;
- Encourage libraries in different areas and different types of libraries to establish consortia and share resources;
- Pay costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies; and
- Target library and information services to persons who have difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities.

Targets

Output Target: At Louisiana's current population, 1/2000 is equal to 2,200 Internet workstations; maintain access in all 327 public library buildings.

Output Target: Maintain 100 T1 lines, and maintain 227 lines at minimally 64 kb speeds (amongst the 327 public library buildings).

Output Target: Maintain access to databases, providing technical support and training for public library staff. Record 300,000 log-ons annually.

Outcome Target: Louisiana libraries will be a partial solution to bridging the digital divide evidenced by a survey that shows fifty percent of Louisianians will know that Internet services are available at their local library; and twenty percent will have actually used these services.

Outcome Target: Louisiana citizens and library staff will have high-speed access to the Internet.

Outcome Target: Louisiana citizens will have information on a wide variety of subjects to assist with school, vocational, and informational needs.

Outcome Target: Maintain state of the art Interlibrary Loan to all public library systems delivering 120,000 loans annually.

TIMELINE FOR NEED 1:					
Objective	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
1. Maintain 1/2000 ratio of Internet workstations; maintain workstations in every public library	X	X	X	X	X
2. Insure support for telecommunications performance at T1 and 64KB speed costs	X	X	X	X	X
3. Maintain subscriptions to informational databases	X	X	X	X	X

Program Activities: State Library will continue to work with public libraries to plan for Internet and database access at the current level or greater. This means assurance of State Aid and the state Technology Fund. State Library staff will work with the legislature, showing them the commitment of the federal government through LSTA to keep libraries connected to electronic resources.

State Library staff will also seek outside funding, such as from the Gates Library Foundation, and further leverage the LSTA and state funds to insure proliferation and sustainability of the Internet and access to the databases. Computer Services staff will continue to work with the public libraries to develop what is already a comprehensive and efficient network.

Need 2. Library Awareness and Usage

Need 2. To increase library awareness and usage through a diverse marketing campaign of reading promotions, including Center for the Book events and databases, summer reading campaigns, and intergenerational literacy efforts. Increase library card registration from the current forty-three percent rate (approximately 1.9 million) to fifty percent (approximately 2.25 million) by 2008. Reach more special customers, defined as those who are visually and hearing impaired.

Background and Needs Assessment: One measure of library usage is library card registration. The national average for persons with a public library card has been about fifty-six percent (56%); but in Louisiana we have only a forty-three percent (43%) registration number. Therefore the promotion of libraries and their services has become a priority for the State Library, particularly in an era when libraries present new technologies and other innovative services.

Secondly, Louisiana is a state lagging in readership due to high rates of illiteracy, or poor reading skills generally (as measured by reading tests). Therefore, the promotion of books and libraries, as well as intergenerational reading programs and other literary events, can have an impact. Getting people into libraries and to library sponsored events can increase library usage, readership, and levels of literacy.

The Louisiana Center for the Book is a program of the State Library, affiliated with the LC Center for the Book, which promotes reading, libraries, books, and literacy. We will focus on several of its programs in the coming period, including statewide events and reading promotions.

Youth services have increased since LSTA funds helped increase programs in this area in the previous five years. Summer Reading programs have reached 5,000 events between the school years. The Young Readers' Choice award allows schoolchildren and young library customers to vote for popular books and celebrate with an author ceremony and visitation.

The State Library continues to act as clearinghouse and coordinator of literacy efforts and grants from the Viburnum Foundation. The next five years will include a new staff person devoted to statewide partnerships with infant and preschool groups and services, so that every Louisiana child (through parents of infants) will be introduced to books and libraries.

Louisiana's school students are given annually the Louisiana Educational Achievement Performance tests. We believe reading programs can have an impact on the reading scores of Louisiana schoolchildren. Spring 2002 scores show that only two percent of eighth graders score in an 'advanced' category; fifteen percent score 'proficient'; thirty-one percent achieve 'basic' skill level; thirty-nine percent reach only an 'approaching

basic' level; and thirteen percent are at an 'unsatisfactory' level. For fourth graders, the scores are: three percent advanced; sixteen percent proficient; thirty-eight percent basic; twenty-nine percent approaching basic; and fourteen percent unsatisfactory. We will monitor these scores over the next five years.

Therefore the specific objectives for the five-year plan are as follows:

Objective 1. Conduct an annual Louisiana Book Festival, gathering authors, publishers, storytellers, and related book and literacy advocates for a celebration of these things.

Objective 2. Design and develop the State Library website to promote the Louisiana Center for the Book's mission of promoting books, reading, literacy, and libraries by the end of 2003.

Objective 3. Expand and promote Louisiana Author database, called the Louisiana Writers Directory, by 200 authors.

Objective 4. Continue reading promotions: The statewide Summer Reading Program; and the Young Reader's Choice Award, each year, with an annual goal of 100,000 participants (SRP registrants plus YRC ballots).

Objective 5. Develop partnerships with statewide groups to promote early childhood reading and library usage.

LSTA Goals addressed in these objectives:

- Help libraries access information through electronic networks;
- Target library and information services to persons who have difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities.

Targets

Output Target: One festival in the autumn of each of the next five years; number of attendees.

Output Target: Have accessible and attractive web page by the end of 2003.

Output Target: Design a statewide program that introduces children to libraries at infancy.

Output Target: Add 75 authors to the Louisiana author database in the first year; 50, 25, 25, and 25 in the ensuing 4 years, annually.

Outcome Target: Be recognized by Louisiana writers and the literary community

Outcome Target: Increase usage of the website and contributions to the Louisiana Library Foundation.

Outcome Target: Improved reading scores for school age children as evidenced in the annual LEAP tests.

Outcome Target: More Louisianians are introduced to books and libraries.

TIMELINE FOR NEED 2.					
Objective	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
1. Conduct annual Louisiana Book Festival.	X	X	X	X	X
2. Design and develop State Library website to promote Louisiana Center for the Book's mission.	X	X	X	X	X
3. Expand and promote Louisiana Author database, called <i>Louisiana Writer's Directory</i>, by 200 authors.	X	X	X	X	X
4. Continue reading promotions: Summer Reading Program and Young Reader's Choice Award.	X	X	X	X	X
5. Develop partnerships with statewide groups to promote early childhood reading and library usage.	X	X	X	X	X

Program Activities: Marketing Louisiana's libraries is an ongoing process, coordinating the work of the Communications Director, the Center for the Book, the Library Development division, and the public libraries themselves.

The first Louisiana Book Festival this autumn will be a breakthrough event in our state. No other book event celebrates the state's diverse literary heritage. The LBF promises to be an annual event drawing a wide variety of customers to literary Louisiana, with the connection to libraries and literacy at the center.

The Center for the Book will have an increasing electronic presence as it publicizes other literary events across the state, and as the author database expands and improves.

With the Summer Reading Program and now the Young Readers Choice Award, the State Library will have a greater connection to schools in our state. Therefore we will watch the development of reading skills through the ongoing Louisiana Educational Attainment Program (LEAP). Greater library usage by youth can mean an improvement in reading scores.

Need 3. Continuing Education in Technological Processes

Need 3. To train public library staff in all technological processes to improve library service to library customers statewide. Maintain the network of continuing education that provides public library staff with knowledge and skills in computer operations and search procedures on the internet and online databases.

Background and Needs Assessment: The proliferation of Internet workstations, the automation of libraries, and the availability of online databases has created a huge demand for training in technology. In surveys done by the Louisiana Library Association and by our Continuing Education Coordinator, staff and supervisors listed technological training far above other subjects. Over the past three years, we have conducted well over a hundred technology workshops, and all but a handful were filled to capacity. We are limited only by a shortage of funds, not a shortage of topics or interest.

Each and every workshop conducted under the State Library's auspices is evaluated and reviewed for various measures of quality – relevance to actual work, success in improving skills, knowledge of speaker or presenter, etc; and we always ask what other workshops can be helpful. The list of desiderata grows, and we respond as best we can. In some cases, we prepare library staff for changes like the Windows 2000 operating system. We did these workshops prior to the installation of the same in many library systems. Similarly, we developed ILL with online and interactive capability ahead of the needs of some libraries; and concomitant training succeeded in getting every library system to use the new ILL methods.

Only a few years ago, such as in the first two years of the previous LSTA plan, we committed approximately a dozen workshops annually. In each of the last two years, we approached one hundred, and will exceed that in the current year. The activities of the Library Development division are consumed by ongoing training workshops. The success of Continuing Education makes it incumbent upon us to continue at as fast a pace as we can set.

Therefore the specific objectives for the five-year plan are as follows:

Objective 1. Training in reference and ILL services will take place annually, usually about four workshops per year for the front line staff of public libraries throughout Louisiana.

Objective 2. Training in Internet navigation and searching, database searching, and other web-related workshops will take place at a rate of 40 workshops annually.

Objective 3. Other workshops for administrators and children's services shall continue at the rate of 10 workshops annually.

LSTA Goals addressed in these objectives:

- Establish or enhance electronic links among or between libraries;
- Help libraries access information through electronic networks;
- Target library and information services to persons who have difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities.

Output Target: Fifty-four workshops for public library staff annually, training them in diverse techniques and operations, attended by at least 1000 total staff.

Outcome Target: Skills of library staff will make them more confident and capable public servants; Louisiana citizens will get the best possible customer service at libraries.

TIMELINE FOR NEED 3.					
Objective	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Objective 1. Training in Reference and ILL services held annually (4 per year).	X	X	X	X	X
Objective 2. Training in Internet navigation and searching, database searching, and other web-related workshops held annually (40 per year).	X	X	X	X	X
Objective 3. Other workshops for administrators and children's services annually (10 per year).	X	X	X	X	X

Program Activities: The State Library has, among its highest priorities, a role as a continuing education clearinghouse and provider. The CE Coordinator is now a permanent and crucial fixture amongst the staff. This position will continue to assess the needs of library staff, design workshops and other training to improve their skills, and evaluate the development of CE for this entire period.

State Library staff will leverage LSTA support to gain monetary commitment for CE. Staff will also seek outside funding to further develop a training program that reaches all levels of staff in all libraries. Consideration for inclusion of all types of libraries should be given. Needs assessment surveys should continue, about annually, and should be used to design future workshops..

Need 4. Provide Special Services for Visually and Hearing Impaired Citizens

Need 4. To provide special services to visually and hearing impaired citizens of Louisiana.

Background and Needs Assessment: The National Library Service (NLS) suggests that 70,000 Louisiana citizens are eligible for special free services from the Section for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. We currently have about 7,000 visually and hearing-impaired Louisianians registered for SBPH services. New automation and materials can increase the number of customers we reach.

The SBPH has also worked toward the mission of the State Library by producing special materials about Louisiana. The Louisiana Voices program includes a special recording studio and production facility, a coordinator of volunteers who provide the voices and technical talent resulting in the production of high interest materials for the visually impaired.

The NLS provides some technological advances for regional libraries to employ. But costs are often borne locally, particularly for the human resources to run the technology. And the concomitant maintenance and upgrades necessary for technology also make this area a financial burden. Nevertheless, the special readers and programs of the SBPH have our full commitment, thanks to assistance from LSTA, to long-range services and improvement of special services of Library.

Therefore the specific objectives for the five-year plan are as follows:

Objective 1. Add 500 registrants annually to the services of SBPH.

Objective 2. Employ new technologies to improve readers' advisory service and circulation procedures.

Objective 3. Expand and improve Louisiana Voices program by producing 20 works annually for visually impaired readers.

Objective 4. Develop media resources in AudioVisual Resource Center by 500 items annually to supplement the needs of local public libraries for non-print resources, particularly Louisiana related music and culture.

LSTA Goals addressed in these objectives:

- Target library and information services to persons who have difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities.

Targets

Output Target: 500 registrants per year.

Outcome Target: Be recognized as a source for assistance to visually and hearing impaired Louisianians.

Timeline for Need 4.					
Objective	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Objective 1. Add 500 registrants annually to SBPH services.	X	X	X	X	X
Objective 2. Employ new technologies to improve reader's advisory service and circulation.	X	X	X	X	X
Objective 3. Expand and improve Louisiana Voices program by producing 20 works annually.	X	X	X	X	X
Objective 4. Develop media resources in Audio Visual Resource Center by 500 items annually.	X	X	X	X	X

Summary of Planning and Implementation Procedures Stakeholder Inclusion Communication of Plan

The State Library of Louisiana is a highly inclusive and accountable agency. No fewer than 10 advisory groups provide feedback, some on a virtually ongoing basis. This plan compiled information from the committees and our own surveys and needs assessments. We collect data on over 160 variables from the annual reports of the public libraries of Louisiana. The sixty-six systems also provide monthly feedback in brief reports.

The management group meets every other week to discuss progress and new initiatives of the library. This group will flatten out the goals and objectives within their respective sections of State Library.

This plan will be posted on the web site and distributed to the LSTA advisory group. Many of the output measures are data collected quarterly by the State of Louisiana in a procedural budgeting method called the Louisiana Public Accountability System. We have new initiatives in this plan – the Louisiana Book Festival and the Louisiana Voices talking book programs are under way.

The Plan will be distributed to the sixty-six library directors at their semiannual conference in October 2002. Their buy-in is essential to many of the objectives.

This plan is now closely related to the strategic plan within state government. This will allow us to focus more specifically on objectives knowing that our objectives are share with a wider group of stakeholders and constituents.

Evaluation Plan and Monitoring Procedures

We suggested that evaluation is an ongoing process. Although the collection of 160 variables of output data is done at year's end from the public libraries, we nevertheless monitor key indicators of activity on at least a quarterly basis. In fact, many of these are actually publicly reported in the Louisiana Public Accountability System (LAPAS). In that system, key and supporting indicators of progress toward objectives allow legislators and the public to examine activities and details of departments of state government. We are happy to be held accountable for progress in public libraries and in services of the State Library to state employees and citizens of our state.

The annual statistical publication, Public Libraries in Louisiana, is compiled each year and published in summer for the previous calendar year. About half of the 160 variables collected are presented in charts and ranked tables to assist librarians, customers, stakeholders, advocates, planners, officials, and any other interested persons. Furthermore, in the last three years we have published them on the web with a special program that allows not only a quick review of the various categories of data, but also permits a user to rank in ascending, descending, or population order the key numbers that describe a library's activities.

We will develop several outcome-based surveys to address some of the outcome targets listed above. These kinds of surveys can show the actual impact of a library on a customer, and better determine the importance of the library within a community.

The State Library is continuously accountable to all its customers and stakeholders, and strives to tell all Louisiana Citizens how library services are effective and efficient.

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